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THE ADMINISTRATION

The Search for Someone to Fill the Clock

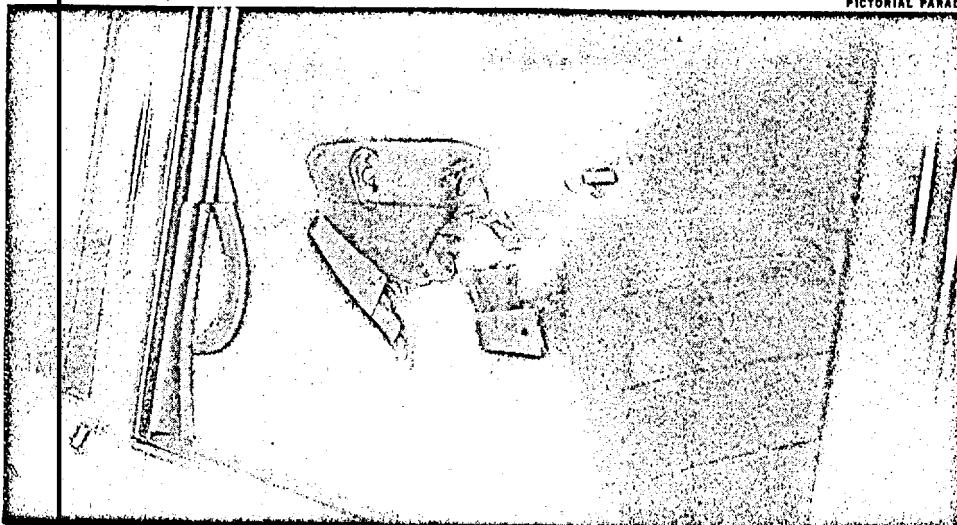
As far back as last June, Central Intelligence Agency Director John McCone told President Johnson that he wanted out. At 63, and after nearly 18 years of Government service (member of President Truman's Air Policy Commission, 1947-48; deputy to James Forrestal, first U.S. Secretary of Defense, 1948; Under Secretary of the Air Force, 1950-51; chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, 1958-61; CIA director since 1961), that seemed a reasonable request. Now McCone has set a definite date for his resignation: May 1. And Johnson has ordered a top-priority search for a replacement.

McCone's will be a tough act to follow. Taking over from Director Allen Dulles, whom President Kennedy dumped after the Bay of Pigs disaster, McCone has steadily and quietly rebuilt confidence in the CIA and its sensitive role. Under his direction, the agency's performance in alerting Washington to the Russian missile buildup in Cuba in the fall of 1962 was flawless. Before the 1963 coup against South Viet Nam's

President Ngo Dinh Diem, the CIA correctly predicted the coup, also warned against the internal strife that would follow. Last Sept. 17 McCone flatly predicted that the Red Chinese would explode their first nuclear bomb within 30 to 60 days. They did—on Oct. 16.

In his search for a new director, President Johnson has assigned Washington Lawyer Clark Clifford, chairman of the President's foreign-intelligence advisory board, to do the looking. While past experience has shown that speculating on Johnson's appointments can be risky, official Washington is doing a lot of guessing. Among those being talked about: Richard Helms, 52, the CIA's deputy director for plans, the man responsible for the agency's cloak-and-daggerish activities; Ray Cline, 47, deputy director for intelligence, in charge of the CIA's overt intelligence operations such as analyzing foreign news and quizzing returning overseas travelers; Navy Secretary Paul Nitze; Lieut. General Joseph Carroll, director of the Defense Department's intelligence agency; Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy, brother of Presidential Aide McGeorge Bundy; and General Maxwell Taylor, the U.S. Ambassador to South Viet Nam.

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CIA DIRECTOR McCONE
In four quiet years, a return of confidence and competence.